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SPENSER'S USE OF THE LITERATURE OF TRAVEL IN THE *FAERIE QUEENE*

I

Although this article aims chiefly to describe that curious interweaving of the mythical and the real which produced the voyage of Sir Guyon to the Bowre of Blisse in the twelfth canto of the second book of the *Faerie Queene*, it may be of interest to note by way of preface that there are scattering and fragmentary references throughout the *Faerie Queene* to the voyages of the sixteenth-century seamen, to the countries new found by them, and to curious and interesting facts about the inhabitants. There is clearly an attempt to utilize bits of the current travel lore for artistic purposes.

Among the passages which merely mention such new names as Peru and America, the best known is probably Spenser's famous "defence" of the *Faerie Queene* in the Prologue to the second book. Some people, Spenser fears, may account "all this famous antique history" as only the "aboundance of an idle braine," but, he goes on to say, other things would have been thought impossible a generation or two ago which are now proved true:

Who euer heard of th' Indian *Peru*?
Or who in venturous vessell measured
The *Amazons* huge riuer now found trew?
Or fruitfullest *Virginia* who did euer vew?
Yet all these were, when no man did them know.¹

Spenser might well defend on this ground the wonders that he tells, for many of them are drawn from the relations of the voyagers themselves. Incidentally these lines fix the date of this Prologue as not earlier than 1584, for that was the date of the first voyage to Virginia by Amadas and Barlowe.

¹ *Faerie Queene*, II, Prol. 2, 3. Other references are: II, x, 72, a reference to America; II, xi, 21, stanza on the bows and arrows of the Indians; III, ii, 6, "the Africk Ismael and the Indian Peru"; V, x, 3, "the Americke shore, the utmost margent of the Molucas." [MODERN PHILOLOGY, November, 1921] 143

More interesting is Spenser's second reference to the river of the Amazons (IV, xi, 21, 22):

And that huge Riuer, which doth beare his name
Of warlike Amazons, which doe possesse the same.

Ioy on those warlike women, which so long
Can from all men so rich a kingdome hold;
And shame on you, O men, which boast your strong
And valiant hearts, in thoughts lesse hard and bold,
Yet quaile in conquest of that land of gold.

Spenser, then, was familiar with the tales, and there were many of them, of the Amazons in America. The very first voyagers brought back stories of islands "in whyche dwell only women, after the manner of them, called Amazones."¹ With the descent of the Amazon River by Orellano in 1540-41, the Amazons were henceforth associated with that region. Thevet, in his *Singularitez de la France Antarctique*, translated from the French and published by Bynneman in 1568, devotes a chapter to telling "How certaine Spanyardes arrived into a country, where they found Amazons," but Spenser must have heard, rather, some such stories as those referred to by Herrera in his *General History of the Western Indies*, 1601-15, Decade VI, Book ix:

Captain Orellano, by means of a vocabulary which he had made, asked many questions of a captured Indian, from whom he learned that that land was subject to women, who lived in the same way as the Amazons, and were very rich, possessing much gold and silver. They had five houses of the sun plated with gold, their own houses were of stone, and their cities defended by walls; and he related other details, which I can neither believe nor affirm, owing to the difficulty of discovering the truth.²

Spenser, however, seems to have made little or no use of these stories for his Amazon episode in the fifth book.

Spenser describes the feather dresses of the Indians in the stanza on Fancy (III, xii, 8):

His garment neither was of silke nor say,
But painted plumes, in goodly order dight,
Like as the sunburnt *Indians* do aray
Their tawney bodies, in their proudest plight.

¹ Richard Eden, *A treatyse of the newe India . . . after the description of Sebastian Münster*, London, 1553, in Edward Arber, *The First Three English Books on America* (Edinburgh, 1885), p. 30. Other references to the Amazons are to be found in the same work, p. 24, and in the *Decades of the newe worlde of West India*, pp. 69, 70, 177, 189.

² *Expeditions into the Valley of the Amazons*, trans. and ed. by C. R. Markham (Hakluyt Society edition), p. 36.

There are a number of descriptions of the feather dresses in the travel books. Perhaps the following one from Eden's *Decades* suggests the "proudest plight" as well as any: "Whereuppon they which were sente to lande . . . makynge a great shoute for ioye of their victory, sette them selues in order of battayle, and so keping their array, returned to the shippes laden with spoyle of those prouinces, and shynyng in souldiers clokes of fethers, with faire plumes and crestes of variable colour."¹ It is barely possible of course that there had remained associated in Spenser's mind three facts from the *Discoverie of Morum Bega*, which was included in Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages*, 1582. There is in this account a description of a number of tribes. Of one we are told that they were "clad with the fethers of foules of diuers colours"; of the next that "they did not desire cloth of silke or of golde, much lesse of any other sorte"; and of the next that "the people differ much from the other. . . . They cloth themselves with Beares skinnnes, and Leoparδες, and sealles, and other beastes skinnnes."² Note now in connection with Spenser's description of the feather dress the first line of the stanza quoted above, "His garment neither was of silk nor say," and the description of Daunger, three stanzas below:

With him went Daunger, cloth'd in ragged week,
Made of Beares skin, that him more dreadfull made.

The coincidence is interesting, but not entirely conclusive.

Spenser has a number of descriptions of savages. There is the savage man with a gentle disposition in VI, iv, and there is the nation of cannibals in VI, viii, both of which have so many counterparts in the travel books that it is needless to point out specific parallels. More interesting, however, is the "wilde and saluage man" (IV, vii, 5-7), the various aspects of whom represent an ensemble from diverse sources. He may be in part a reminiscence of the folk character of the wild man, or "wode man," who figured in Elizabethan pageants.³ This wild man was usually hairy (cf. IV, vii, 5), carried a

¹ Arber, *op. cit.*, p. 160. Other descriptions are to be found in Thevet, *op. cit.*, p. 39, and Girolamo Benzoni, *History of the New World, shewing his Travels in America, from A.D. 1541 to 1556* (Hakluyt Society edition), p. 178.

² *Divers Voyages*, ed. by J. W. Jones (London, 1850), pp. 63, 65, 70.

³ Robert Withington, *English Pageantry* (Cambridge, 1918), p. 72 ff. Frederick S. Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford, 1914), p. 161, gives a quotation from a diary for January 8, 1582, which mentions such a "savage."

wooden club (cf. IV, vii, 7), and was "with a wreathe of yuie greene Engirt about" (cf. IV, vii, 7). He was not, however, large-lipped and long-eared as is Spenser's wild man.¹ Hairy men are of course frequently met with also in the travel books, but large lips and long ears are of rarer occurrence. Spenser writes:

His neather lip was not like man nor beast,
But like a wide deepe poke, downe hanging low,
In which he wont the reliques of his feast,
And cruell spoyle, which he had spard, to stow.

Marco Polo, describing the inhabitants of Zanzibar, writes, "They have large mouths, their noses turn up toward their forehead, their ears are long, and their eyes so large and frightful, that they have the aspect of demons."² This description taken in connection with the rest of Spenser's picture, is fairly close, but there is a closer parallel in Mandeville: "And in another isle be folk of foul fashion and shape that have the lip above the mouth so great, that when they sleep in the sun they cover all the face with that lip."³ This, to be sure, is the upper lip, but the transfer was a simple matter. Spenser, it is true, may be following a Celtic tradition here. In the story of *Kilhwch and Olwen*, Gwevyl, the son of Gwestad had lips so large that he could drop one below his waist and cover his head with the other.⁴

As for the ears, Spenser's lines are:

And downe both sides two wide long eares did glow,
And raught downe to his waste, when up he stook,
More great then th' eares of Elephants by *Indus* flood.

In Mandeville, a few lines below the description quoted above, is found: "And in another isle be folk that have great ears and long, that hang down to their knees." Eden has two references to long ears. In his translation of Sebastian Münster the Spaniards are told that there are men

not onely with hanging eares, but also with eares of such breadth and length, that with one of them they myghte couer theyr hole head. But the Spaniardes, who soughte for gold and spyces, and not for monsters, sayled directly to the Ilandes of Mollucca.

¹ Withington, *op. cit.*, p. 54, mentions the fact that the pageant figure of the giant sometimes had "large ears" and "big mouths," but he cites no examples.

² *The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London, 1854), p. 432. Cf. Eden, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

³ *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, ed. by A. W. Pollard (London, 1900), p. 196.

⁴ *The Mabinogion*, ed. by Alfred Nutt (London, 1904), pp. 112-13.

And in his *Decades*:

The pilote which owre men brought owt of the Ilandes of Molucca toulde them that not farre from thense, was an Iland named Arucetto in the which are men and women not past a cubite in height, hauynge eares of such byggesse that they lye uppon one and couer them with the other.¹

Spenser seems to have made use of either Marco Polo or Mandeville also for an item in his description of Maleger. Maleger, we are told (II, xi, 26), fled on a tiger:

And in his flight the villen turn'd his face,
(As wons the *Tartar* by the *Caspian* lake,
When as the *Russian* him in fight does chace)
Unto his tygres taile, and shot at him apace.

Mandeville writes:

And ye shall understand that it is great dread for to pursue the *Tartars* if they flee in battle. For in fleeing they shoot behind them and slay both men and horses.²

And Marco Polo:

When these *Tartars* come to engage in battle, they never mix with the enemy, but keep hovering about him discharging their arrows first from one side and then from the other occasionally pretending to fly, and during there flight shooting arrows backwards at their pursuers, killing men and horses, as if they were combating face to face.³

This characteristic is less frequently mentioned in sixteenth-century treatises. It is scarcely possible that Spenser could have seen a reference to the custom in a manuscript copy of Giles Fletcher's *Of the Russe Common Wealth*, a book which was the fruit of a diplomatic mission to Russia in 1588, but which was not however published until 1591.

To mention a final example, the picture of Disdain (VI, vii, 43) goes back in part either directly or indirectly to travel books of a different class:

He wore no armour, ne for none did care,
As no whit dreading any liuing wight;
But in a Iacket quilted richly rare
Upon checklaton he was straungely dight,
And on his head a roll of linnen plight,
Like to the Mores of Malaber he wore;
With which his locks, as blacke as pitchy night,
Were bound about, and voyded from before.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 34-35, 260.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 165.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 136.

The keynote phrase in this passage is the "Mores of Malaber." There are many descriptions of Malabar in the travel books, but in few of them are the inhabitants referred to as Moors. Even Marco Polo is too discriminating to give them that name. The phrase is probably to be traced back to some Portuguese travel book, for the Portuguese writers had the habit of referring to all Mohammedans indiscriminately as Moors. Especially is the *Book of Duarte Barbosa* full of the phrase, "the Moores of Malabar." This travel book was probably completed about 1518 and was translated into Italian by Ramusio and included in his collection of voyages. Spenser may possibly have gleaned his description of the dress of Disdain from Barbosa. Following is Barbosa's description of the costume of the kings of Malabar: "Sometimes they clothe themselves with short jackets open in front, reaching halfway down the thigh, made of very fine cotton cloth, fine scarlet silk, or of silk and brocade. They wear their hair tied upon the top of their heads, and sometimes long hoods like Galician casques."¹ Elsewhere he speaks of the use of cloth of gold (Spenser's "checklaton"): "They go very well attired in rich cloth of gold, silk, cotton and camlets. They all wear turbans on their heads, these turbans are long like Moorish shirts."²

Fragmentary as these passages are, they indicate clearly one of the more remote and curious ramifications of Spenser's interests. Whether Spenser actually read the *Book of Duarte Barbosa* or Thevet's *Singularitez*, or Eden's *Decades*, or got his material from them by some indirect means, is a relatively unimportant question. The interest in the strange and exotic forms of life and manner of living so picturesquely set forth by them remains.³ In the following section

¹ *A description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the 16 c. by Duarte Barbosa*, trans. by the Hon. H. E. Stanley (Hakluyt Society edition), p. 104.

² *Hakluyt Society* edition, Ser. II, Vol. XLIV, p. 120.

³ It is interesting to note in this connection that Gabriel Harvey, Spenser's close friend and guide in matters intellectual, had apparently a very considerable acquaintance with the travel books. In *Pierce's Supererogation* we read: "But read the report of the worthy Western discoueries, by the said Sir Humfry Gilbert; the report of the braue West-Indian voyage by the conduction of Sir Fraincis Drake; the report of the horrible Septentrionall discoueries by the trauail of Sir Martin Forbisher; the report of the politique discouery of Virginia by the Colony of Sir Walter Raleigh; the report of sundry other famous discoueries and aduentures, published by M. Rychard Hackluit in one volume, a worke of importance," etc. See Gregory Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (Oxford, 1904), II, 261-62. The possible influence of Sir Walter Raleigh on Spenser need only be mentioned.

we shall see how he blends material from the travel books with various legends and fictions and creates from the combination a faery voyage peopled with "shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses."

II

It is perhaps generally recognized that the voyage of Sir Guyon under the guidance of the Palmer and with the help of the "heedfull Boatemman" to the Bowre of Blisse in the twelfth canto of Book II of the *Faerie Queene* resembles in certain respects the medieval *Legend of St. Brandan*, but the points of similarity between the two have not, I believe, been pointed out in detail, nor have there been discussed certain other possible sources, which I should like to offer, for various passages in this canto.

Let us consider first the *Legend of St. Brandan* and its possible relation to the voyage of Sir Guyon. The legend was easily accessible to Spenser. It seems to have been very popular in the Middle Ages, for it survives in many versions. There is a Latin version which has been edited by Jubinal from "les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du roi," together with a twelfth-century French prose translation and a French metrical version from the thirteenth-century *Image du Monde* of Gautier de Metz.¹ This Latin version is somewhat longer than the Latin version of Capgrave in the *Nova Legenda Angliae*. Capgrave's version was published in English by Wynkyn de Worde in 1516. There is also an English prose version of the legend in the *Golden Legend*. The text from which I quote is from Wynkyn de Worde's 1527 edition of the *Golden Legend*. Besides the English prose version in the *Golden Legend*, there is a Middle English metrical version in the *Southern Legend Collection* of the late thirteenth century or early fourteenth century.² There are various other Latin, French, and Anglo-French versions,³ but I

¹ A. Jubinal, *La légende latine de S. Brandaines, avec une traduction inédite en prose et en Poésie Romanes* (Paris, 1836). There is another Latin MS, edited by Schröder, 1871, which I have not been able to see. For references to critical papers on the subject see Best, *Bibliography of Irish Philology and of Printed Irish Literature* (Dublin, 1913), p. 115; and Wells, *Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, p. 806.

² Both the English version of the *Golden Legend* and of the *Southern Legendary* have been edited by Thomas Wright in the "Publications of the Percy Society," Vol. XIV. The metrical version is from MS Harl. 2277, fol. 41, v^o.

³ Schirmer, *Zur Brandanus-Legende* (Leipzig, 1888).

shall only mention further the Celtic "Life of Brenainn" in the *Book of Lismore*.¹ Of these various versions the one most readily accessible to Spenser was the English prose version in the *Golden Legend*, and that seems also to be as near to the passage in the *Faerie Queene* as any, although the English prose and metrical versions are so like that it is difficult to decide between them.² I find nothing in the longer Latin version, edited by Jubinal, parallel to the voyage of Sir Guyon which is not also in the English of the *Golden Legend*. The Celtic version deals more largely with the early life of St. Brandan, or Brenainn, and less with the *Navigatio*, and is perhaps the least like the passage in the *Faerie Queene*.

What, then, are the parallels between *St. Brandan* and Book II, canto xii, of the *Faerie Queene*? In the former we have the story of a voyage in quest of the Land of Promise, a long voyage beset with many dangers from tempest, fowl, and sea monster, a voyage past many marvelous islands, "the which were a very great wonder," as the sixteenth-century seamen were fond of saying. In the latter, likewise, we pass with Sir Guyon and the Palmer a series of marvelous islands and escape a succession of similar dangers. In the former voyage, St. Brandan is the controlling Christian spirit who holds his men in check, warns them of the floating island, and prays for help when they are attacked by whale and "grype." So in the latter, the Palmer guides the boat safely past the Rock of Vile Reproch, past the singing mermaids, past the "seemely Maiden, sitting by the shore," and scatters the multitude of fish with his "vertuous staffe." Both voyages end in a kind of happy otherworld, the former in the Londe of Byheest that "Adam and Eve dwelte in fyrst," and the latter in the Bowre of Blisse, which partakes largely of the nature of the Londe of Byheest but is modified in accordance with Spenser's moral aim into a bewitchingly lovely bower of temptation.

Examining the correspondence between certain of the episodes more closely, it is perhaps sufficient merely to mention in passing the episode of the floating islands, for the parallel in this case is not

¹ Whitley Stokes, *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), text, pp. 99-116; translation, pp. 247-61.

² It is entirely possible that Spenser knew both the English prose and the Middle English metrical versions, for, while the canto seems on the whole nearer to the prose version, there is at least one passage, which I shall note later, that more nearly resembles the metrical version.

close. In the legend the monks, all but the wary St. Brandan, go upon an island to prepare their dinner. When the fire becomes very hot the island begins to move. The monks, fleeing back to the ship, "mervayled sore of the moving. And saynt Brandon comforted them, and sayd that it was a grete fisshe named Jasconye, which laboureth nyght and daye to put his tayle in his mouth, but for gretnes he may not."¹ The floating islands which Sir Guyon and the Palmer pass are real islands which lure the voyagers by the pleasantness of their woods and dales. Spenser may possibly have taken his original conception from the legend, but if so he modified the type of island considerably. We shall have more to say later on the subject of floating islands.

The next analogous episode is that of the fish. There are two fish episodes in the legend, (1) the attack by the whale, and (2) the threatened danger from the multitude of fish and their dispersal by St. Brandan. There is a single episode in the *Faerie Queene*, but that one episode partakes of the nature of the two in the legend, first in the description of the waterspout caused by the fish, and second in the surging of the multitude of fish about the vessel and their dispersal in this case by the Palmer:

And soone after came to them an
horrible fysshe, which followed
the shyppe long tyme, castynge
so moche water out of his mouth
into the shyppe that they sup-
posed to have ben drowned.

[*Op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.]

And then anone all the fysshes
awoke and came aboute the shippe
so thicke, that unneth they myght
se the water for the fysshes.

Suddeine they see from midst of all
the Maine,
The surging waters like a mountain
rise,
And the great sea puft up with proud
disdaine,
To swell aboute the measure of his
guise,
As threatning to deuoure all, that his
powre despise.

[Stanza 21.]

All these, and thousand thousands
many more,
And more deformed Monsters thou-
sand fold,
With dreadfull noise, and hollow
rombling rore,
Came rushing in the fomy waues
enrold.

[Stanza 25.]

¹ *St. Brandan*, ed. by T. Wright, "Publications of the Percy Society," XIV, 39.

And whan the masse was done, all
the fysshes departed so that they
were seen no more.

[*Op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.]

Tho lifting up his vertuous staffe on
hye,
He smote the sea, which calmed was
with speed,
And all that dreadfull Armie fast gan
flye.

[Stanza 26.]¹

Again, both parties of voyagers pass through a dark cloud before they come to their destination:

And after this they tooke theyr
shyppe and sayled eest xl. dayes,
and at the xl. dayes ende it began
to hayle ryght fast, and therewith
came a derke myst, which lasted
longe after, whiche fered saynt
Brandon and his monkes, and
prayed to our Lord to kepe and
helpe them.

When suddainly a grosse fog ouer
spred
With his dull vapour all that desert
has,
And heauens chearefull face enuel-
oped,
That all things one, and one as
nothing was,
And this great Uniuerse seemd one
confused mas.
Therat they greatly were dismayd,
ne wist
How to direct their way in darke-
nesse wide
But feard to wander in that wastful
mist.

And soone after that myst passed
awaye, and anone they sawe the
fayrest countree eestwarde that
only man myght se.

Till that at last the weather gan to
clear,
And the faire land it selfe did plainly
show.

And than anone came theyr procura-
tour, and badde them to be of
good chere, for they were come
into the Londe of Byheest.

Said then the Palmer, Lo where does
appeare
The sacred soile, where all our perils
grow.

[*Op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.]²

[Stanzas 34, 35, 37.]

¹ Compare with this the metrical version which seems slightly closer:

1. Berninge fom out of his mouth he caste,
The water was hegere than here schip bfore hem at eche blaste.
2. The fisch sturte upe with here song, as hi awoke of slepe
And flote al aboute the schip, as hit were at one hepe;
So thikke hi flote about bi eche half, that now other water me ne sez
And bisette this schip al aboute, ac hi ne come ther sez.
So thikke hi were aboute the schip, and suede hi evere so,
The while this holi man his masse song, forte he hadde i-do;
And tho the masse was i-do, eche wende in his ende.

[*Op. cit.*, pp. 19, 21.]

There are, however, other parallels to this passage, to be noted later, which Spenser may have known.

² I have transferred the order of the last two quotations. There is another description of this cloud at the beginning of the legend, p. 36.

In the passage in the *Faerie Queene* the voyagers are attacked while the darkness is upon them by an "innumerable flight of harmefull fowles. . . . Even all the nation of unfortunate And fatal birds." This does not occur in any of the versions of *St. Brandan* that I have seen, but at another point in the voyage St. Brandan and his monks are attacked by a "grete grype, which assayled them and was lyke to have destroyed them."¹ It is possible that Spenser put the two episodes together.

Finally, certain features of the *Londe of Byheest* are similar to those of the *Bowre of Blisse*. Both luxuriate in flowers and fruits and pleasant meadows, and "there was alwaye daye and never nyght, and the londe attemperate ne to hote ne to colde."²

Such are the similarities between the medieval saint's legend and Book II, canto xii: correspondence in the general scheme of the voyage past marvelous islands; in the rôles played by St. Brandan and the Palmer; and in certain details of the development. But this by no means accounts for the whole of the canto. Even taking into consideration the obvious classical borrowings—the Charybdis, the song of the Sirens, the Circean animals—all of which have been sufficiently pointed out in the annotated editions, and the borrowing from Tasso's Garden of Armida which have also been pointed out,³ there is much that is unaccounted for. What of the magnetic rocks? of the ship stranded on the sand? of the lure of the "seemely mayden"? of the ivory gates and the golden fruit, the bed of roses? Was Spenser using any other sources?

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 47. The appearance of supernatural beings in the form of birds is a common convention in Celtic legends. Cf. the list of references in T. P. Cross, "The Celtic Origin of the Lay of Ynec," *Revue celtique*, XXXI, 437-38, n. For the convention of the mist surrounding the Celtic otherworld, cf. A. C. L. Brown, "The Knight of the Lion," *PMLA*, XX (1905), 677-78, n.

² *St. Brandan*, p. 55. These features are characteristic of otherworld descriptions.

³ There are references to the borrowing in Schramm, *Spensers Naturschilderungen* (Leipzig, 1908), p. 22 ff.; in Koeppl, "Die englischen Tassoübersetzungen . . . , II B: Spensers Verhältnis zu Tasso," *Anglia*, XI, 341-62; in the annotated editions, especially those of Todd and Kitchin, and in R. E. Neil Dodge, "Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto," *PMLA*, XII, 151. Dodge here says that "the Bower of Bliss (Book II, canto XII) is taken bodily from the *Gerusalemme liberata* (c. XV, XVI)," a statement more sweeping than accurate. While it is true that Spenser probably borrowed more from *Gerusalemme liberata* than from any other single source, the fact remains that he and Tasso are working on the basis of different conceptions of the fairy otherworld. Tasso is using the convention of the mountain, possibly oriental in origin, and Spenser the more typical Celtic convention of the island. Cf. H. R. Patch, "Medieval Descriptions of the Otherworld," *PMLA*, XXVI (1918), 606-19.

There are several other possible sources. In the first place *St. Brandan*, or *Imram Brendain*, to use its Celtic title, is one of a series of *imrama*, or tales of sea voyages which follow much the same lines as *St. Brandan*.¹ There are strange and remarkable islands in all, supernatural events, and often wondrously beautiful women who lure the voyagers into the land of the unreal (especially in *Imram Brain mac Febail*, and *Imram Curaig Maelduin*). It is possible and not in the least improbable that Spenser, with his interest in fable and legend of every sort, may have picked up some of these tales during his long residence in Ireland.² It is possible also that he became acquainted with the happy otherworld as it appeared in numerous other Celtic legends. Perhaps he had heard the story of how the fairy maiden lured away Condla the Fair to be "an everlasting king, without wail or woe" in the Land of the Living where it is ever summer and the flowers ever bloom.³ Possibly also he knew of the voyage of Teigue, son of Cian, in which Teigue touches on a fairy otherworld almost as beautiful as Spenser's own and in many respects similar to it.⁴ There are "delicate woods with empurpled tree-tops fringing the delightful streams" (cf. Spenser, st. 58); there is a marvelous "minstrelsy" of birds; a wonderful fragrance (Spenser: "That still it breathed forth sweet spirit and wholesome smell," st. 51); there are luscious grapes (sts. 54-55), superlatively lovely women, and rich workmanship in gold and silver and precious jewels.⁵ Before one draws any hasty conclusions, however, it should be remembered that many of these features,

¹ For a list of the *imrama* see Best, *op. cit.*, or Thrall, "Vergil's *Aeneid* and the Irish *Imrama*: Zimmer's Theory," *Modern Philology*, XV, 450.

² There is no evidence that Spenser read Irish. He would have to get these tales second hand.

³ The "Adventure of Condla the Fair," trans. by J. O'Beirne Crowe, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, XIII, 129 ff.

⁴ S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica: The Adventures of Teigue, Son of Cian* (London and Edinburgh, 1892), II, 385-401.

⁵ For a summary of the features of the Celtic otherworld which was to be found across the sea, see Alfred Nutt, "The Happy Otherworld in the Mythico-Romantic Literature of the Irish," in *The Voyage of Bran, Son of Febal, to the Land of the Living*, ed. by K. Meyer (London, 1895-97), I, 229-30; Zimmer, "Keltische Beiträge, II," *Z.f.D.A.*, XXXIII, 280-81; and A. C. L. Brown, "Iwain," *Harvard Studies and Notes*, VIII, 82-94. Westropp has pointed out ("Brasil and the Legendary Islands of the North Atlantic," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, XXX, 255) that this happy otherworld, called variously Magh Mell, the Isle of the Living, the Isle of Truth, the Isle of Joy, etc., was associated with the legendary island of O Brazil which was sought by early mariners, and actually placed on the charts from 1320 down to 1865.

especially the fragrance, the music, the equable temperature, and the beautiful landscape, are conventions which are common not only to Celtic but to non-Celtic descriptions of the happy otherworld.¹ In the *Vision of Saturnus*, for example, mention is made of the "unspeakable sweet odor"; in the *Visio Pauli*, of the wonderful fruits and vines and of the "land more brilliant than gold and silver"; in the *History of Barlaam and Josophat*, of the clear music of the trees and the delicate fragrance.² And the Old English poem, *The Phoenix*, has an elaborate and beautiful description of an otherworld scene in which the temperateness of the climate and the beauty of the country are as elaborately set forth as by Spenser and very nearly as ably. Even the grotesque *Land of Cockayne* has most of the common conventions.³ It is hard to conceive that as wide a reader as Spenser could have been unacquainted with at least some of these accounts, but their very multiplicity makes it utterly useless to attempt to set up any one of them as a direct source.

The situation seems to be slightly different, however, in the case of a possible Greek source, the *True History* of Lucian, the tale of a voyage across the ocean and through space to many wonderful islands and countries, among them the Isle of the Blest. While there is no single parallel between Spenser's account and the *True History* significant enough in itself to establish a definite relationship between them, there are enough similarities in details to make out a fairly good case. The *True History* was easily accessible to Spenser. There were a number of Latin translations of the *Works*, two Latin translations of the *True History*, one published in 1475 and one in 1493, and there was a French translation of the *Works*, published in 1583.

There was, however, another source of material which Spenser had at hand besides the Celtic and non-Celtic mythical voyages to the happy otherworld, and that was the sixteenth-century travel

¹ Cf. A. C. L. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-47, for a discussion of the happy otherworld in romances and lays.

² There are quotations from these three works in Nutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-49.

³ Nutt has discussed certain classical treatments of the happy otherworld idea, *op. cit.*, I, 258 ff. See also a work not mentioned by Nutt, the *Oceanica* of Iambulus, retold by Diodorus, ii. 4, and by Purchas in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Bk. I, chap. viii. Iambulus sails across the ocean to a marvelous island which has a temperate climate, wonderful fruits and flowers, etc.

lore with which, as we have already seen, Spenser undoubtedly had some acquaintance.

Let us turn back to the beginning and consider some of the episodes in the light of these other possible sources.

Stanzas 4, 7, 8: "The Rocke of vile Reproch."—This rock, composed "of mightie *Magnes* stone," that draws passing boats toward it, is to be met with in the tales of the travelers. André Thevet, in his *Singularitez*, writes: "Likewise in this same sea are found Ilands named Manioles . . . nere to the which there are great rocks that draw the ships unto them, be'cause of the yron wherwith they are nailed."¹ There seems to be a closer parallel in Mandeville, however, if one takes into consideration the continuation of the description in stanza 7:

On th' other side, they saw that perilous Rocke,
Threatning it selfe on them to ruinate,
On whose sharpe cliffs the ribs of vessels broke,
And shiuered ships, which had bene wrecked late,
Yet stuck.

In Mandeville, chapter xxx, we find:

For in many places of the sea be great rocks of stones of the adamant, that of his proper nature draweth iron to him. . . . I myself have seen afar in that sea, as though it had been a great isle full of trees and buscaylle, full of thorns and briars great plenty. And the shipmen told us, that all that was of ships that were drawn thither by the adamants, for the iron that was in them. And of the rotten-ness, and other thing that was within the ships, grew such buscaylle . . . and of the masts and sail-yards.²

Stanzas 10-13: The wandering islands.—Spenser's reference in this passage to the island of Delos suggests a classical source for the idea,³ but it is worth noting that there was still a widespread belief in the sixteenth century in the existence of floating islands. They were usually referred to as St. Brandan's Isle, or sometimes the Isles of St. Brandan, and often appeared on the early maps in various parts of the Atlantic.⁴ So firm was the belief in such an island as

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 178-79; see also pp. 109-10.

³ Besides the island of Delos here referred to, there are classical allusions to the Cyanean Islands, or Symplegades, Herodotus iv. 85; Pindar *Pyth. Odes* iv. 371, etc. See, further, the classical references in the passage from F. Colon to follow.

⁴ Westropp, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-45.

St. Brandan's that various expeditions were sent out to find it, and it was said by the Portuguese, Louis Perdigon, that the king of Portugal had ceded the island to his father "if he could discover it."¹ Perhaps the best exposition of the sixteenth-century ideas on the subject occurs in Ferdinand Colon's *History of the Life and Actions of Admiral Christopher Colon*, first published in Italian in 1571. The question of whether or not this is a forged document need not concern us here. Columbus is reported by the author to have doubted the discovery of certain islands, thinking that

perhaps they were some of those floating islands that are carried about by the water, called by the sailors Aguadas, whereof Pliny makes mention in the first book, chap. 97, of his natural history; where he says, that in the northern parts the sea discovered some spots of land, on which there are trees of deep roots, which parcels of land are carried about like floats or islands upon the water. Seneca undertaking to give a natural reason why there are such sorts of islands says in his third book, that it is the nature of certain spongy and light rocks, so that the islands made of them in India, swim upon the water. So that were it never so true, that the said Anthony Leme had seen some island, the admiral was of opinion, it could be no other than one of them, such as those called of St. Brandan are supposed to be, where many wonders are reported to have been seen. . . . Juventius Fortunatus relates, that there is an account of two islands towards the west, and more southward than those of Cabo Verde, which swim along upon the water.²

Further, John Sparke in his narrative of *The Voyage made by Master John Hawkins . . . in 1564* mentions "certain flitting islands," in the neighborhood of the Fortunate Islands. Finally, there are floating islands in the *True History* of Lucian:

We had proceeded something less than fifty miles when we saw a great forest, thick with pines and cypresses. This we took for the main land; but it was in fact deep sea, set with trees; they had no roots, but yet remained in their places, floating upright as it were.³

Stanzas 18-19: "The Quicksand of Unthriftyhed" and the goodly ship stranded thereon.—If Spenser had in mind some particular ship in this account—and considering his general tendency toward specific allegory, it is likely that he did have—it may very well have been

¹ Jubinal, *op. cit.*, p. xvii.

² Pinkerton, *General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1812), XII, 14-15. See also the reference to the Isle of St. Brandon in Caxton, *Mirroure of the World*, Part II, chap. xiii.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 170.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert's vessel, the "Delight," which was stranded on the sands and there wrecked by the waves in 1583. It will be remembered that Raleigh was particularly interested in this expedition to plant colonies in the new world and had shared in the undertaking to the extent of sending along a ship of his own, which, however, was forced to abandon the voyage. Spenser, if he had not seen or heard an account of this disaster elsewhere, could have got it from Raleigh himself. Edward Hayes, in his account of the voyage writes, "Betimes in the morning we were altogether run and folded in amongst flats and sands." The breaking of the waves upon the sands made Master Cox think that he had seen land. (Compare with Spenser's "That quicksand nigh with water couered; But by the checked wave they did descry It plaine," st. 18, vss. 6-8.) After the "Delight" grounded,

all that day, and part of the next, we beat up and down as near unto the wreck as was possible for us, looking out if by good hap we might espy any of them. This was a heavy and grievous event, to lose at one blow our chief ship freighted with great provision, gathered together with much travail, care, long time, and difficulty.

etc.¹ (Compare with Spenser, st. 19.) There is no other stranded vessel quite so well known as this or quite so similar to Spenser's "goodly Ship." In *The Famous Voyage of Sir Francis Drake . . . begun in the year of our Lord 1577*, there is a description of a stranded ship, it is true, but this ship was stranded on the rocks and it was saved by the mariners.

Stanzas 21-26: The episode of the sea monsters.—Although this episode is generally parallel with two episodes in *St. Brandan*, it will be remembered that there was nothing either in the prose or metrical version of the legend quite comparable to the description of the "dreadful noise, and hollow rombling rore" as the fish "Came rushing in the foamy waves enrolld" (st. 25; see also st. 22). There are, however, descriptions parallel to this in the travel books. In the "True and Last Discouerie of Florida" printed by Hakluyt in the *Divers Voyages*, 1582, there is a description of water which was

¹ *The Principal Navigations* (Glasgow, 1904), VIII, 65-67. Spenser probably did not see this particular account of the wreck, for it was first published by Hakluyt in 1589. I give the quotations to illustrate the similarity in the situation.

"boyling and roaring through the multitude of all kind of fish",¹ and in Thevet's *Singularitez* we find:

About this lyne [Equinoctiall] is founde such abundance of fishes of sundry and divers kindes, that it is a marvelous and wonderful thing to see them above water, and I have heard them make such a noyse about the ships side, that we could not hear one another speke.²

Stanzas 43-45: The wall and the ivory gates.—Spenser tells us concerning the Bowre of Blisse that "Goodly it was enclosed round about," and that there was a gate which "framed was of precious yuory, That seemed a work of admirable wit." One of the commonest devices of the Celtic *imrama* and legends is that of the walled island. Gold and silver ramparts abound in the otherworld descriptions. In the *Imram Curaig Maelduin* there is an island with four walls, composed respectively of gold, silver, brass, and crystal,³ and in the country visited by Teigue, son of Cian, there is a palisade of gold about *inis Patmos*, the abode of the saints and holy men, and a silver rampart about the abode which was prepared for the righteous kings of Ireland.⁴ It is unnecessary to multiply examples. Spenser may or may not have had these descriptions in mind. The ivory gates are to be found in the *True History*. The passage is this: "At last we reached it [the Isle of Dreams] and sailed into Slumber, the port, close to the ivory gates where stands the temple of the Cock."⁵ The suggestion for the picture on the gates Spenser probably got from the elaborate silver doors in *Gerusalemme liberata*, XVI, 2-8.

Stanzas 54-57: The intoxicating fruit.—In the Bowre of Blisse is an arbor of grapes, some "empurpled as the Hyacint," some ruby, some emerald, and some like burnished gold, and there is a "comely dame" who takes this fruit, "scruzes" it into a cup of gold, and offers the wine to passers-by. St. Brandan and his monks stop at a "lytell ylonde, wherein were many vynes full of grapes,"⁶ but these grapes are not spoken of as intoxicating. Intoxicating fruit, however, is frequently met in other Celtic voyages to the otherworld.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

³ *Revue celtique*, IX, 487; see also X, 51.

⁴ *Silva Gadelica*, II, 391, 393.

⁵ Lucian, *op. cit.*, p. 166. The idea doubtless goes back to Homer *Odyssey* xix, 562 ff.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

The following illustration from the *Imram Curaig Maelduin* is typical. Maelduin

squeezed some of the berries into a vessel and drank [the juice], and it cast him into a deep sleep from that hour to the same hour on the morrow. And they knew not whether he was alive or dead with the red foam round his lips, till on the morrow he awoke. [Then] he said to them: "Gather ye this fruit, for great is its excellence."¹

There are also intoxicating grapes in Lucian's *True History*. The voyagers come upon a vine, half-human in quality, the very kiss of whose grapes on the lips of the men is intoxicating.² I find no descriptions of golden fruit, but golden and silver foliage is found in a number of descriptions of the Celtic otherworld.³

Stanzas 63-69: The episode of the bathers.—Although this passage is undoubtedly an imitation of *Gerusalemme liberata*, XV, 58-66, it is interesting to note that there is an episode in which a somewhat similar device is used in *Imram Curaig Maelduin* (Sec. xxviii), and there is a kind of grotesque analogy in the *Land of Cockayne*:

The zung nunnes takith a bote
And doth hem forth in that riuér
Bothe with oris and with stere.
When hi beth fur from the abbei,
Hi makith ham nakid for to plei,
And lepith dune in-to the brimme,
And doth ham sleilich for to swimme.⁴

Stanzas 70-76: The music.—This passage, again, seems to be drawn chiefly from *Gerusalemme liberata*, XVI, 12 ff., but there are certain details not to be found in this source. Spenser describes the "most melodious sound" as being compounded of the music of "Birdes, voyces, instruments, windes, waters," which idea he develops charmingly in stanza 71. In the following stanza he mentions a choir of "Many faire Ladies, and lasciuious boyes." Tasso blends merely the song of the birds and the winds:

The wind that in the leaves and waters played
With murmur sweet, now sung, and whistled now;
Ceased the birds, the wind loud answer made,
And while they sung, it rumbled soft and low.

¹ *Revue celtique*, X, 71.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

³ Especially in "The Adventure of St. Columba's Clerics," *Revue celtique*, XXVI, 139; *The Voyage of Bran*, I, 20.

⁴ Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben*, I, 147-52, ll. 152 ff.

Even the solo in his version is sung by a bird. But in Lucian there are the following descriptions:

Sweet zephyrs just stirred the woods with their breath, and brought whispering melody, delicious, incessant, from the swaying branches; it was like Pan-pipes heard in a desert place. And with it all there mingled a volume of human sound, a sound not of tumult, but rather of revels where some flute, and some praise the fluting, and some clap their hands commending flute or harp;

and,

During the meal there is music and song. . . . The choirs are of boys and girls. . . . When these have finished, a second choir succeeds, of swans and swallows and nightingales; and when their turn is done, all the trees begin to pipe, conducted by the winds.¹

Stanza 77: Acrasie represented as reclining on a bed of roses.—This detail does not occur in *Gerusalemme liberata* which Spenser is following rather closely in this passage, but in the *True History*, again, the guests in the banqueting place "recline on cushions of flowers." There would, of course, be no significance whatever in the resemblance in this minor detail if it were not for the numerous other corresponding details.

I should be sorry to seem to imply that Book II, canto xii, is nothing more than a laborious compilation from a number of specific sources, and that Spenser himself was incapable of inventing even minor elaborations on the general scheme. It has been my only purpose to attempt to illumine somewhat a very small portion of the vast background of tale and legend which must have contributed at some time or other to the storehouse of Spenser's mind before he wrote the *Faerie Queene*. About the common theme of the voyage and the fairy otherworld there became associated in his mind such facts and fancies as lingered there from many and varied sources, ideas which came into play when he started to write his own voyage to the Bowre of Blisse. Fairly certainly one of these contributing tales was some version of the St. Brandan legend. Possibly certain other Celtic myths and legends contributed. Without doubt some of the very prolific tales of the travelers helped to make up the background whether or not Spenser got his material directly from the specific sources noted. Possibly there remained associated

¹ *Op. cit.*, 156, 159-60.

together in his mind a group of details from the *True History*—the ivory gates, the blended music, the couch of flowers, the floating islands. Finally one of the sources which he knew the most intimately, or possibly had read the most recently, was the description of the Garden of Armida from the *Gerusalemme liberata*.

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